

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner noted that claims 1, 9, 10, 17, 19, 20, 22-25 and 27-29 were pending in the application and the Examiner rejected all claims. By this Amendment, various claims have been amended and new claims 30-34 have been added. Thus, claims 1, 9, 10, 17, 19, 20, 22-25 and 27-34 are pending in the application. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

Rejection Under 35 § U.S.C. 112

In items 3 and 4 on page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 112. By this Amendment, the objectionable language has been removed. Thus, it is submitted that claim 1 meets the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Interview

Appreciation is expressed to the Examiner for the telephone interview granted on June 14, 2007. During the interview, the undersigned discussed with the Examiner how the present invention as set forth in claim 1 includes a control unit for changing an operation mode of the pointing device according to contents displayed on the display screen at the time the pointing device is operated, so that depending on the display currently being displayed on a display screen, the pointing device has a limited range of movement selected based upon the current display. These features are described on pages 10 and 11 of the specification. Additional comments raised by the undersigned in the interview are included below. The Examiner indicated that based upon an initial review, these features were not disclosed by the currently cited prior art. However, the Examiner indicated that he would have to review both the currently cited prior art and additional prior art to determine whether these features could be found somewhere in the prior art.

The Prior Art Rejection

In item 6 on pages 4-13 of the Office Action and item 2 on pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected all claims as unpatentable over Nishimoto, Published U.S. Application 2002/0155857 in view of Japanese Patent Publication 05181603 to Hotta et al. and U.S. Patent 6,765,598 to Kim.

Claim 1

The present invention as set forth in claim 1 is directed to a pointing device that can be operated to move an operational object on a display screen in any 360-degree direction. The pointing device comprises a control unit for changing an operation mode of the pointing device according to contents displayed on the display screen at the time the pointing device is operated. The control unit determines a direction in which the operational object can be moved on the display screen according to the operation mode to limit the movement of the operational object on the display screen to less than the 360-degree direction based on the contents displayed on the display screen. Thus, the present invention as set forth in claim 1 provides a pointing device which has a limited range of movement selected based upon the current display on a display screen (e.g., a mobile phone or PDA).

The Prior Art

The Nishimoto reference is directed to a pointing device and mobile telephone in which an optical sensor for reading an optical image of a finger that is kept in contact therewith is installed below an LCD for displaying information (see Abstract). The pointing device has a sensor section which reads an optical image of a finger and detects movements of the finger. Based upon the movements of the finger detected by the sensor section, the control section shifts the pointer (paragraph [0009]). After the pointer has been set to a desired piece of information by the finger contacting the sensor section, the finger is further used to push a switching section so that information is easily selected (paragraph [0014]). Referring to Figs. 1 and 2, a finger 30 is shifted while it is in contact with a sensor window 8 so as to set the pointer to a desired menu among menus displayed on an LCD 3. An optical image of the finger, detected by an image sensor 44c is transmitted to a CPU 10 (Fig. 3) so that the shifting direction and shift distance of the finger 30 are found. Based on this, the CPU 10 shifts the pointer displayed on LCD 3 (paragraphs [0052 and 0053]).

The Hotta reference is directed to an information input device which precisely shifts the cursor on a display in a completely horizontal or vertical direction by operating the cursor while pressing a switch provided on a mouse.

The Kim reference is directed to a method and apparatus for enabling selection of an on-screen menu in which the speed of movement of a pointer between icons of different levels is

made faster than the speed of movement of the pointer between icons of the same level (see Abstract).

The Claims Patentably Distinguish Over the Prior Art

Applicants have reviewed the prior art relied on by the Examiner and do not believe that any of this prior art, alone or in combination, teach or suggest a pointing device which has a limited range of movement selected based upon the current display on a display device such as a mobile phone or PDA. Referring to claim 1, it is submitted that the prior art does not teach or suggest:

wherein said control unit determines a direction in which said operational object can be moved on said display screen according to said operation mode to limit the movement of the operational object on the display screen to less than the 360-degree direction based on the contents displayed on the display screen.

Claims 9, 10, 17, 19, 20, 22, 30, 33 and 34 depend, directly or indirectly from claim 1 and include all the features of that claim plus additional features which are not taught or suggested by the prior art. For example, claim 33 specifies:

A pointing device according to claim 1, wherein when said display screen displays icons, the movement of the operational object is limited to only the direction in which the icons are arranged.

In addition, claim 34 specifies:

A pointing device according to claim 1, wherein based on the contents displayed on said display screen, the movement of the operational object is limited to one or more of horizontal, vertical or diagonal directions on the display screen.

Thus, it is submitted that these claims patentably distinguish over the prior art.

Claim 23 is directed to a method for controlling a pointing device and recites:

wherein in said controlling step, a direction in which said operational object can be moved on said display screen is determined according to said operation mode to limit the

movement of the operational object on the display screen to less than the 360-degree direction based on the contents displayed on the display screen.

Therefore, it is submitted that claim 23 patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

Claims 24 and 31 depend, directly or indirectly from claim 23 and include all of the features of that claim plus additional features which are not taught or suggested by the prior art. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 24 and 31 patentably distinguish over the prior art.

Claim 25 is directed to a mobile telephone and recites:

wherein said control unit determines a direction in which said operational object can be moved on said display screen according to said operation mode to limit the movement of the operational object on the display screen to less than the 360-degree direction based on the contents displayed on the display screen.

Therefore, it is submitted that claim 25 patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

Claims 27, 28, 29 and 32 depend, directly or indirectly from claim 25 and include all the features of that claim, plus additional features which are not taught or suggested by the prior art. Therefore, it is submitted that these claims patentably distinguish over the prior art.

SUMMARY

It is submitted that none of the references, either taken alone or in combination, teach the present claimed invention. Thus, claims 1, 9, 10, 17, 19, 20, 22-25 and 27-34 are all in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the claims and an early notice of allowance are earnestly solicited.

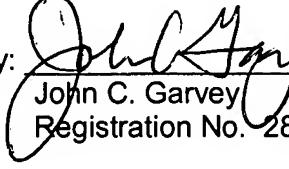
If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: June 15, 2007

By:


John C. Garvey
Registration No. 28,607

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501